

Rachel Gruslin (6th Grade: Mason, Ohio)
Level I Second Place Winner
Letter to Cornelia Fluke concerning her book, *Thief Lord*

Dear Cornelia Fluke:

There are many books that I have read that weren't really inspiring, but in your book the *Thief Lord*, I felt as if the world had just changed into a new place. I used to laugh at all the kids who would read all the time at lunch or at home, and I never used to read many books myself. That all changed because I had to do a book report for my teacher.

As I said, before this book report I never liked to read books unless I had to for a school project. I would sit at home and watch my mom read, I would ask her how she read so fast, and why she liked reading. She told me once, that if I read while I am young, I would progress into a better reader and student, and I might love to read when I am older. I still paid no attention to any books my mom would give me. Every time I started or at least tried to read a book I would put it down because I would be bored and I would go to text my friends or play with my guinea pigs.

When my teacher gave me the book it had this mysterious cover on it. It was quite drab with just a shadow that looked like a Curlew bird's beak. I was interested in it already because I like abnormal things like that. I skimmed over the book, it didn't interest me, so I decided to read later. I just put the book on my desk and went to outside with my friends. Later on that night I decided to pick up the book and at least read a couple or chapter of it just to get it over with, but then I was on the fifth chapter when I couldn't put the book down. I just had to keep on reading it! I was on a reading rampage!

As I read the book I felt as if I was really part of this mystery novel, like I was Victor and had to solve the case and to get the boys back top Esther. When I finally finished the book a couple of days later I let out a lough "sigh" and said to myself, "That's it. It can't be done already! What am I going to do now?"

For the first time in my life I felt something that I have never felt before, and I didn't even know it existed, HUNGER, for another book to read! I quickly rushed out of the door to the nearest book store. The people in the book store probably thought I was a maniac the way I was trying to find the next great book you had made. Five minutes of agonizing searching, I finally found it. The perfect one for me, your book, *InkDeath*. I couldn't wait to leave the store so I could start reading.

When my Grandmother comes over, she always asks me, what am I doing, and for the first time in my life I get to tell her something new. I told her I had a new passion, and it is for reading! She couldn't believe her ears. Now when I see people at lunch reading I won't laugh at them because I am just the one to be laughed at. I really think a lot of people should read this book, and maybe one day they will become a member of the reading family just like I had done.

Thank you so much for taking me into the reading world,

Sincerely,

Rachel Gruslin